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The Monthly Minute

with State Senator John Pappageorge

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Economic Stimulus Priorities

Dear Friend:

As you know, President Obama recently signed the federal stimulus package totaling \$787 billion in increased government spending. Of that sum, the state of Michigan will receive \$7.7 billion in direct aid. We must now decide what our priorities will be in determining how this money is spent.

While I understand that the federal government is taking action with the intent of preventing an outright economic depression, it must be made clear that this money represents a loan that will have to be paid back by our children and grandchildren. Therefore, we must not waste this opportunity by continuing "business as usual" and funding programs that cannot be sustained after the one-time payment has gone. Rather, our focus needs to be on addressing the fundamental flaws within our current system that prevent government from functioning as it should.


This is why I have outlined the following three priorities that need to be met before any other options are considered:

1. Reduce debt. Did you know that 22% of our state's transportation budget goes directly toward debt service? This is money that, if the debt was eliminated, could be spent on improving our roads more now and in the future. This is a no-brainer.
2. Eliminate the 22% surcharge on businesses. Currently, businesses of all sizes in Michigan are experiencing enormous increases in their tax liability due to this onerous "tax on a tax." It is unacceptable that during a time of net job losses, the businesses that do continue to operate in the state are being punished with excessive tax increases. This tax is a job-killer and we would send a positive message to job providers by eliminating the tax immediately.
3. Implement a "tax holiday." The best way to stimulate the economy and help those struggling is to let citizens keep more of the money they earn. The average American has to work until July just to pay their share of the cost of government. Eliminating state income taxes for the however many months the remaining stimulus money will allow would offer immediate and real relief to all citizens — money that could be spent on keeping their homes, paying down other debts, or even consuming goods in the market place.

By sticking to these priorities, we will bring much-needed structural changes to how government operates, as well as relief to taxpayers. This means my colleagues and I will still need to trim state government by consolidating departments, eliminating under-performing programs and reducing spending in most areas.

As Michigan residents are forced to tighten their budgets and Michigan businesses are forced to reduce their costs, it is clear that Michigan government must do the same. I look forward to working with the governor and my counterparts in the House of Representatives to finally bring real, long-lasting reform to the way state government operates.

Sincerely,


John Pappageorge



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Bill to stop jobs-killing rules passes Senate

The Michigan Senate recently approved a bill to prevent mandatory ergonomics standards from taking effect that would severely harm the viability of Michigan job providers. As a co-sponsor of this bill, I was pleased to see the Senate take action.

Senate Bill 93 would prohibit the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration from establishing burdensome mandatory ergonomic rules or standards. Voluntary guidelines would remain per-

missible but could be no more stringent than federal guidelines.

Despite statements to the contrary, the Granholm administration is on the verge of a mandatory ergonomics rule that will have a significant negative impact on Michigan job providers.

The cost of the state standards to job providers is expected to reach \$500 million or more. California is currently the only state in the nation to have mandatory ergonomics

rules.

Voluntary standards by businesses have produced positive results. Michigan's repetitive stress injury rate decreased by nearly 40 percent since 1998 without mandated ergonomic standards - better than the nationwide drop of 32 percent during that time.

SB 93 now heads to the Michigan House for consideration, where I will be urging quick action.

Sen. Pappageorge co-sponsors bill to reform DEQ

Legislation that I co-sponsored, Senate Bill 187, will help reform state government, reduce costs and streamline the permitting process. The legislation will essentially turn wetland permitting over to the federal government.

SB 187 would transfer authority from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for issuing permits granting landowners permission to undertake improvements on their land, if designated as wetland.

Michigan is one of only two states

that currently perform this function. The legislation would repeal the DEQ's authority, automatically reverting the process to the federal government.

This bill will allow property and business owners to manage their properties as long as federal guidelines are met and will create a consistent standard of regulation.

According to an article in *The Detroit News*, if the reform is adopted Michigan could save an estimated \$2 million a year. Clearly, this is not a time for government to overlook any measure of cost-savings.

SB 187 has been referred to the Committee on Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs.



February District Office Hours

My February district office hours will be held on Saturday, February 28th. Please feel free to stop by to discuss any legislative issues of concern or simply to say hello. As always, no appointment is necessary.

Troy Community Center
3179 Livernois
9 to 11 a.m.

Birmingham Baldwin Library
300 W. Merrill
noon to 2:00 p.m.

Salter Community Center
1545 E. Lincoln • Royal Oak
3 to 4 p.m.

→ DON'T
FORGET!

Property Tax Town Hall Forums

As a service to my constituents, I am offering two separate "Property Tax Town Hall Forums" to provide expert information on the following topics:

- Why your property tax bill rises while your property value falls;
- What you need to know to appeal your property taxes - including step-by-step instructions; and
- A panel of experts available to answer your questions.

Monday, February 23rd - Royal Oak

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Oakland Community College

Royal Oak Campus—739 S. Washington

Lila Jones Johnson Theatre

No RSVP required

Tuesday, February 24, 2009 - Birmingham

7 to 9 p.m.

Birmingham Community House

380 S. Bates Street

RSVP to (248) 644-6300 (Required)

Around the district...



It was an honor to assist in the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at Sunrise Assisted Living's newest location in Bloomfield Township. I was joined by local officials, including Representative Chuck Moss (pictured), incoming residents, staff and owners of Sunrise.

I was very excited to take part in the Troy Boy Scouts, Pack #1712, Pinewood Derby held at the Troy Community Center on Saturday, January 31st. The Boy Scouts, through various fund raising projects, earned enough money to purchase a new race track and put it to the test. They invited me to come and visit and to participate by running one of the races.



South Oakland Business Expo

Complimentary Ticket



**Wednesday, March 11, 2009
1-6 pm Royal Oak Farmers Market
316 E. 11 Mile Rd.**

**Come see over 100 exhibitors from
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**South Oakland Business Expo
Wednesday, March 11, 2009 1-6pm
Royal Oak Farmers Market, 316 E. 11 Mile Rd., Royal Oak**

Fill out form or attach business card



Name: _____
Business: _____
Address: _____
City/Zip: _____
Email: _____

Admission \$5 at the door if you do not have this pass

**Don't miss out on your free ticket to the South Oakland Business Expo.
The event is being held on Wednesday, March 11 at the Royal Oak Farm-
ers Market. Cut out the above ticket to gain access to over 100 exhibitors
and support your local businesses.**



Questions or Comments?

If you have any questions or comments regarding information in this
newsletter, or wish to be removed from or added to the mailing list,
please contact my office at the following information:
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